

Suffering Gloriously 1 Peter 4:12-19

1 PETER

PEOPLE OF PURPOSE
IN A WORLD OF CHAOS

Life can be likened to many things: a journey, a marathon, a box of chocolates, a vapor, a puzzle. One oft-used metaphor is war. Life is a battle. It entails suffering. We see this played out regularly, whether in actual warfare or in battles with, say, cancer. We are regularly thrust into extreme situations that not only require us to suffer, but that invite us to do so *gloriously*. Christians, especially, know this because we follow a crucified savior. It was the cross that most poignantly revealed his glory, and it's the daily taking up of our crosses that will reveal ours.

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19 then discuss:

1. When suffering, Peter says there are two things not to feel: surprise and shame.
 - The call to not be surprised by suffering feels especially pertinent to Christians like us because that is exactly how we often feel. Why do you think that is? Why are we so taken aback by pain?
 - What about shame? Do you ever feel shame because you suffer? Think of a time when you did. Try to explain what that feeling is and where it comes from.
2. On the flipside, when suffering, Peter says there are two things we want to feel: blessed and trustful. (See verses 14 and 19.)
 - Have you ever had a sense of the Spirit's presence in your suffering? Of God's glory and pleasure in your faithfulness through suffering? We always want to believe in it, but have you felt it? Explain.
 - What about trust? Does entrusting yourself to your "faithful Creator" come easy or hard for you? Practically speaking, how can a person find, feel, and express that trust?
3. Wrestle with verses 17-18 say that it is time for judgment to begin, and that it begins with us.
 - What do you think that means?
 - How do you reconcile this with a verse like Romans 8:1, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"?
 - Read Jesus' words in Matthew 24:9-14. How does this shed light on the subject?
 - Since we're speaking a lot about feelings here, what do you think Peter wants us to feel as we read verses 17 and 18?
4. What's one bottom-line takeaway for you from this passage?